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Double Talipes Varo-Equinus
of the Second Degree,
operated on by Phelps's
Method.

BY

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A REPORT OF MY OWN CASE OF DOUBLE TALIPES VARO-EQUINUS

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OPERATED ON BY PHELPS'S METHOD.*

By J. H. HUNTLEY, M. D.,

ALGER, OHIO.

I WAS born on April 11, 1851, with double talipes equinovarus. At the time of my birth I had an older half-sister with a similar deformity. We were both children of the same father, but not of the same mother. Notwithstanding that both cases were congenital, there was no hereditary cause in the family history on either side.

Nothing was done to correct the deformity in my case until I was in my sixteenth year, when I undertook to have an operation on my own responsibility. Dr. M. did the operation in May, 1867, by dividing, subcutaneously, the tendo Achillis, the plantar fascia, the tibialis anticus, and the tibialis posticus. He manipulated the feet and made an effort to put on a straight shoe with brass soles and steel side-braces running above the knee. This treatment was both very painful and inefficient. After I had worn them for about a month an aneurysm formed on the left foot in the posterior tibial artery. An operation was done by the same surgeon to relieve the enlargement by ligating

* Read before the Section in Surgery of the New York Academy of Medicine, May, 1882.

the artery above the aneurysm. In about seven days secondary hæmorrhage set in, and I came near bleeding to death. Another operation was now done higher up by cutting down on an artery which was not found. I was placed on my back and my foot swung up at an angle of forty-five degrees, and kept in this position for twelve days until all danger of hæmorrhage was past.

I did no more with my feet until the next spring. I then went to an orthopædic institution in Charleston, Ill., under the charge of Dr. H. R. Allen. I was there operated on by subcutaneous tenotomy of the same tendons as before and his clubfoot shoe put on, which is a modification of the Sayre shoe. I wore these shoes three years, and then returned to the same man at Indianapolis, Ind., and had the tendo Achillis divided again and a new pair of braces applied. I wore these for about two years, and then quit wearing a brace on the right foot, but kept it on the left. In my right foot I still had a tense plantar fascia and tendo Achillis, and could not walk barefooted or get my heel down, but had to pad it up with cotton. In the winter of 1876-'77 I was at the Michigan University attending medical lectures, and Professor McLean thought the Sayre rubber-muscle method



FIG. 1.

would help me. He applied the rubber tubing on the outer side of the leg to take the place of the peronei muscles, and also applied the interrupted current of electricity to the atrophied mus-

cles. This was continued for three or four months without any benefit. I then gave up the idea of ever having anything more done. But in the mean time I consulted several good

surgeons; among them was Professor Gunn, of Chicago. They all told me to let them alone.

In 1890 I read an article on Phelps's method by Dr. A. M. Phelps, of New York. I was well pleased with the method, and resolved to see him and make another trial, as I was getting worse as I grew older. I felt determined to have an operation by the open-incision method or have a Pirogoff amputation on the left foot.

I went to the Post-graduate Hospital and was operated on February 24, 1892. Fig. 1 represents the condition of my feet at that time.

Dr. Phelps did his ordinary operation for talipes equinovarus without doing any bone operation. The left foot required a lever force of nearly fifteen hundred pounds to bring the foot into position and bring the heel down. In ten weeks I was able to assume my duties as a physician, and there has been no tendency to relapse, but a steady improvement during the ten months that have elapsed since the operation. I stand well on the bottom of my feet and perform my labor with more comfort by one half than I ever dared to hope. Fig. 2 is from a recent photograph.



FIG. 2.



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